

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

COURSE II

PAPER A3 (b) LANGLAND AND GOWER

TRINITY TERM 2012

Friday, 18 May, 9.30 am – 11.30 am

Time allowed – Two hours

Answer *one* question. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

You may write on Langland or Gower or on both of them in comparison with each other or on either or both of them in comparison to Chaucer.

Do *not* turn over until told that you may do so.

1. *Piers Plowman* is 'a poem shaped by knowing and wanting' (NICOLETTE ZEEMAN).
2. 'During the course of the Middle Ages, literary allegory, although it remained a distinct entity, became closely associated with the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures' (DAVID AERS). How useful do you find Aers' insight for an appreciation of *Piers Plowman*?
3. 'A gylour shal himself bigyled be.' (*The Reeve's Tale*)
Consider the theme of deception AND/OR revenge in Langland AND/OR Gower.
4. 'O moral Gower' (*Troilus and Criseyde*). Do you agree?
5. Chaucer and Langland are 'bound in a mutual relationship, each necessary to configure the other' (JOHN BOWERS). To what extent, if at all, do you agree?
6. 'In [Gower's] kind of narrative, so spare, so direct, and so concentrated on the event, it is not easy to distinguish the merit of the telling from the intrinsic merit of the story' (C.S. LEWIS). Have you found this to be the case?
7. Thus thorough Hende-Speche entred the frere,
And cam in to Conscience and curteisly hym grette.
'Thow are welcome', quod Conscience, 'kanstow heele sike?'
(*Piers Plowman*)
8. 'Langland was as unsystematic an artist as he was a theologian' (W.T.H. JACKSON).
9. As the *Confessio [Amantis]* progresses, the destructive self-division of Amans tends to converge with the same destructive forces represented in the stories themselves' (JAMES SIMPSON).
10. 'Sic Amor ecce vetus Troie mutatur in iram,
Cantus et ex planctu victus ubique silet...'
[And so the old love of Troy is changed to wrath, and song, wholly overcome, falls from complaint into silence...]
(*Vox Clamantis*)

Discuss Langland's AND/OR Gower's engagement with the theme of poetry and the role of the poet.

11. 'And that Deeth in [Adam] fordide, my deeth shal releve,
And both quyke and quyte that queynt was thorough synne'
(*Piers Plowman*, B-text)

EITHER (a) Discuss Langland's word-play OR any other formal aspect of his poetic art.

OR (b) Write an essay on Langland's engagement with the Incarnation AND/OR human sinfulness.

12. Chaucer's 'is a literature in and of the textual condition: a literature of what it means to write and read' (SETH LERER). Is this also true of Langland AND/OR Gower?

13. W.W Skeat called *Piers Plowman* 'a true autobiography'. Write on the use of the first person in Langland AND/OR Gower.

14. 'The breadth and uniformity of Langland's fourteenth-century satirical world is most conveniently experienced through contemporary poets, Chaucer and Gower ... whose satirical objects and images are surprisingly similar to his' (JOHN A. YUNCK).

15. 'Gower's self-conscious deployment of all his languages is crucial to his poetic project' (SIÂN ECHARD). Write an essay on multilingualism in Gower AND/OR Langland.